

## Shrubs & Trees recipes

In the penultimate episode of Grow Your Own Drugs, recipes include a salve using St John's Wort to help heal wounds and a pain-relieving granita made from willow bark and limes. Also, try treating shaving rash with a witch hazel gel; and if your sinuses are blocked, you may find that a home-made eucalyptus decongestant could help.

### St John's Wort Salve

To make the infused oil: -50g St John's wort flowering tops ml sunflower oil, to cover

Lightly bruise the flowering tops, then place in a glass jar. Cover with the sunflower oil, then leave to steep on a sunny windowsill, turning occasionally, for up to 1 month. Sunlight is crucial for the reaction to work, and when it has you will be rewarded with an oil that, as if by magic, has turned a bright rusty red colour. If after a month the oil is still clear, leave it a little longer until the sun has done its work - don't worry, it will eventually get there. Once bright red, strain off the spent flowers and discard. The resultant oil can be applied to wounds as it is, or turned into a rich, thick salve perfect to pop into your hand/man-bag.

To make the salve: tsp beeswax ml infused St John's wort oil

In a pan, gently dissolve the beeswax in 50ml infused St John's wort oil on the lowest flame possible - this should take no longer than 1-2 minutes. While still warm, pour into a wide-mouthed jar. The salve will set as it cools.

USE: Apply as needed to cover the affected area, up to 3 times a day.

CAUTION: Do not expose treated skin to direct sunlight. If any irritation occurs, wash off immediately.

STORAGE: The salve will keep in a cool dark place for up to 1 year. The infused oil will keep for 6 months to 1 year.

### Willow & Lime Pain-Relieving Granita

2 litres water g dried willow bark (Salix) g sugar (or to taste) Zest and juice of 3 limes tbsp orange blossom water

1. In a pan, pour the freshly boiled water over the dried willow bark and simmer for 10 minutes.
2. Strain out the bark and return the decoction to the pan, simmering uncovered until reduced to about 600ml (about 20-30 minutes). At this stage, the mixture will be intensely bitter, but do not let that faze you; sugar and limes can cover a multitude of sins.
3. Take off the heat and stir in the sugar, lime juice, zest and orange blossom water, and leave to cool. Once cool, place in a covered ice-cream tray and freeze. This makes about 8 doses.

USE: For adults, to relieve the pain of headache, place about 100ml (an ice-cream-scoop-sized dose) in a bowl and eat with a spoon, up to 3 times a day.

**CAUTION:** Anyone who is allergic to aspirin or any other anti-inflammatory drug, or who suffers from an ulcer or has asthma, should not take willow bark. Do not take if you have been warned not to take aspirin by your doctor, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Children and adolescents under 16 years should not take willow bark either. If you are taking any other medication, check with your doctor or pharmacist first.

**STORAGE:** Will keep for up to 1 year in a freezer.

### Witch Hazel Aftershave Gel for Shaving Rash

To make the witch hazel tincture: g fresh witch hazel leaves and twigs, or 25g dried Zest of 4 limes bay leaves scented pelargonium 'Old Spice' leaves About 450ml white rum (40% alcohol or 80% proof), to cover

Chop the witch hazel leaves and twigs and place in a jar with the lime zest, bay leaves and 'Old Spice' pelargonium leaves. Pour the rum over to cover, and store in a cool dark place for 10 days to 1 month, shaking the tincture every couple of days.

To make the witch hazel water: g fresh witch hazel leaves and twigs litre of water

Put the chopped witch hazel leaves and twigs into a pan, cover with the water and simmer gently for 1 hour or so, reducing the liquid until you have 100ml left. Strain.

To make the aftershave gel: sachets vegetable gelatine

When the tincture has infused for 10 days to 1 month, strain and measure 200ml into a pan. Add 100ml of the witch hazel water, then mix in 4 sachets of vegetable gelatine. Place the pan on a low heat, whisking as it thickens. Once thick, take off the heat and bottle.

**USE:** Splash on after shaving, as needed.

**STORAGE:** The gel will keep for 4 weeks in the refrigerator. The tincture will keep for at least 1 year.

### Eucalyptus Decongestant Rub for Sinusitis

100g mature eucalyptus leaves g ginger  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp ground black pepper g white petroleum jelly drops peppermint essential oil

1. Chop the eucalyptus leaves and ginger, and place in a glass heat-proof bowl. Add the ground pepper and petroleum jelly and mix everything together with your fingers.
2. Place the glass bowl, covered, on a pan of boiling water to make a double boiler. Leave to heat for 1 hour, making sure the water does not boil dry.
3. Take off the heat and strain the mixture. Stir in the peppermint oil and bottle in a wide-mouthed jar.

**USE:** Once a day, rubbing well into the chest and throat area. The rub can help you get a good night's

sleep if applied before bed.

CAUTION: Do not use on broken skin. If any reddening or irritation occurs, wash off immediately.

STORAGE: Will keep for up to 1 year.